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ZOAR
A BOOK OF VERSE



HELEN AND BERNARD
BOSANQUET

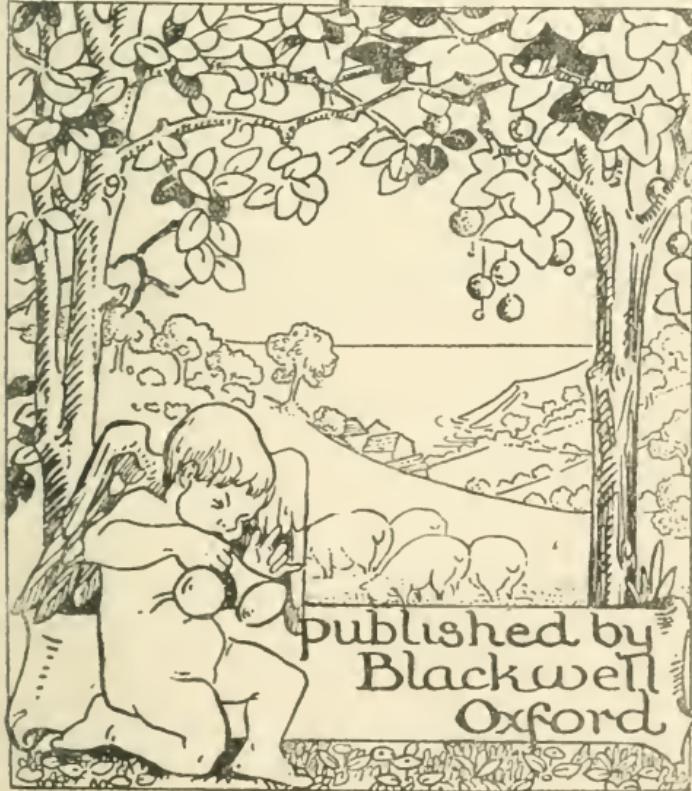
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Z O A R

Zoar
a book of verse by
Helen & Bernard
Bosanquet



published by
Blackwell
Oxford

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29.

Artists who wield a finely tempered blade
Forbear to blunt the keen edge of the steel
In shaping matter for our daily needs ;
But workmen when their day's long toil is done
May turn their heavier tools to lighter ends
And fashion little objects for their joy.

So we, whose pens have laboured long in prose,
Turn them to verse as day draws to a close.

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TRANSLATIONS

By B. B.

Note.—The English titles have no authority. They are suggestions to aid interpretation. The references to Goethe's "Werke," necessary because some of the verses are not included in the two volumes of "Gedichte," are to the Stuttgart edition of 1857.

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MEPHISTOPHELES TO THE STUDENT [LETTER AND SPIRIT]

(Goethe's "Faust." Mephistopheles is a double character. Here he represents the revolutionary spirit of nature and freedom, akin to the Erdegeist, and analogous to Carducci's Satan.)

SO is the factory of thought
As a master work by a weaver wrought,
Where at every throw that the weaver
treads
He sets in motion a thousand threads,
And to and fro the shuttles fly,
And the woof runs swifter than the eye,
And a thousand unions are knit
With each successive pulse of it.
The great logician comes to see,
And proves exactly how all must be,
The first is so, the second so,
Therefore the third and fourth are so,

MEPHISTOPHELES TO THE STUDENT •

And if the first and second were not,
The third and fourth could never be got.
And all the students are believers,
But none have turned out master weavers.
He who'd portray a living whole
Begins by banishing its soul,
He grasps the pieces one by one,
But the spirit-bond, alas ! is gone.

KLÄFFER

[BARKERS, *i.e.* THE CRITICS]

(Goethe's "Gedichte," II. 40)

WE ride the country up and down
On business and on pleasure,
And still a baying follows us
 And barking out of measure ;
Just so one's stable terrier
 Delights to run beside him,
And all its barking clamorous
 Proves only that one's riding.

EIN QUIDAM SAGT

[TO THE ORIGINALS]

(Goethe's "Gedichte," II. 85, "Den Originalen")

" I 'M of no school,' I hear one say,
 " I court no master of to-day,
 And there is nothing that I could own
 To have learned from men who are
 dead and gone."

That means, if I have grasped his rule,
" I am a self-begotten fool."

ICH HIELT MICH STETS
["AND SAE CAME OF IT"]

(Werke, III. 111, "Zahme Xenien")

"FROM masters I have ever kept apart,
 To follow others' footsteps seemed
 disgrace,
Myself have from myself learned all
my art";
"Too plainly, that's the case."

WENN EIN EDLER GEGEN DICH FEHLT
[THE HIGHER SHREWDNESS]

(Werke, III. 22)

M AKE believe that you did not note it
When a noble nature has done you
wrong ;
Be sure in his book of debts he wrote it,
And will see you well repaid ere long.

WEITE WELT UND BREITES LEBEN [THE RESEARCHER]

(Goethe's "Gedichte," II. 121. Motto to "Gott und Welt.")

LORE large-hearted of life's ways,
Zealous toil of countless days,
Still researching, still detecting,
Never closing, still connecting ;
Old truth loyally conserved,
New truth cordially observed,
Temper cheerful, purpose true ;—
Why, one gains a step or two.

VOR DEM WISSENDEN

[THE MASTER]

(Werke, IV. 65. "West-östlicher Divan. Buch der Be-
trachtungen")

'T IS safe to meet in every case
The Master in his judgment-place ;
When you have laboured long in vain
Straightway to him your want is plain,
And you may hope a word of cheer,
For he knows too, "you've hit it here!"

GENERALBEICHTE

[GOOD RESOLUTIONS]

(From Goethe's "Gedichte," I. 110)

A ND we vowed it then and there,
Vowed all halfness to forswear,
In the whole, the good, the fair,
Resolutely living.

GERN WÄR' ICH UEBERLIEFRUNG LOS

[HEREDITY]

(Werke, III. 141, "Zahme Xenien")

FAIN were I from tradition free
And quite original ;
But I view the prospect anxiously
As one that must appal ;
No doubt I'd count autochthony
My most supreme ambition,
If I were not so curiously
Myself a mere tradition.

My father gave my stature tall
And rule of life decorous ;
Mother my nature genial
And joy in making stories ;
Full well my grandsire loved the fair,
A tendency that lingers ;

GERN WÄR' ICH UEBERLIEFRUNG LOS 

My grandam gold and gems so rare,
An itch still in the fingers.

If no part from this complex all
Can now be separated,
What can you name original
That is in me created ?

ES WAR EIN KÖNIG IN THULE

[CONSTANCY]

(Goethe's "Gedichte," I. 155)

HERE was a king in Thule
Was faithful to the grave ;
To him his leman dying
A golden beaker gave.

He quaffed it at every banquet,
That old king loved it so ;
And when he drank from out it
His eyes would overflow.

And when he lay a-dying
He reckoned his cities up,
And he gave his heir the kingdom,
But he gave him not the cup.

ES WAR EIN KÖNIG IN THULE

Once more he sat at the banquet
'Mid all his chivalry,
In the banquet hall ancestral of
The castle by the sea.

There drank that ancient drinker
His last draught of life's glow ;
Then hurled the sacred goblet
Into the sea below.

He watched it fill and settle,
He saw it vanish fast ;
And then his eyes grew sunken,
For that draught was his last.

“ INS INNERE DER NATUR ” AND
FREUNDLICHER ZURUF
[PHILISTINE MYSTICISM]

(See W. Wallace, “ The Logic of Hegel,” p. 421. The four lines “ Ins Innere der Natur ” are from Haller’s “ Menschliche Tugenden.” The comment on them, Goethe’s Freundlicher Zuruf, is in Goethe’s Works, XXVII. 161.)

HALLER

“ GREAT Nature’s inmost heart
 No human soul may know ;
Thrice blest, to whom her outward
 part
She condescends to show.”

GOETHE

(“ *A friendly plaudit* ” to progressive science)
“ Great Nature’s inmost heart,”
 You Philistine !
“ No human soul may know ”—
 To me and mine

"INS INNERE DER NATUR" •

Bring no such tale, for we,
We hold, at every place
Are in the inner shrine.

" Thrice blest, to whom her outward part
She condescends to show."

This cant I've listened to for sixty years,
And curse in whispers when it meets my ears ;
Ten thousand times in my own heart I cry,
" All doth she give, glad and abundantly " ;

Nature has neither husk nor heart,
She shows her all in every part ;
But one distinction is eternal
If thou thyself art husk or kernel.

ANGELS, BEARING FAUST'S
IMMORTAL PART

[SALVATION]

(End of "Faust," Part II)

WE rescue from the evil one
 This spirit high and brave ;
Who still aspires and labours on,
 Him we have power to save ;

And since on earth supremest love
 Bent its regard upon him ;
We greet him joyfully above
 In heaven that has won him.

SELIGE SEHNSUCHT

[THE TRUE LIFE-PASSION]

(Werke, IV. 23)

SELL it not save to the wise,
Shun the many's mocking breath;
What has life then most I prize
When it woos the fiery death.

• • • •
Die to live, for thou who hast not
Made this law thine own
Art but an embarrassed novice
In a world unknown.

[It seems well to subjoin these wonderful lines
in the original.]

Und so lang du das nicht hast,
Dieses : Stirb und werde !
Bist du nur ein trüber Gast
Auf der dunklen Erde.

DENN DIE WÜNSCHE VERHÜLLEN UNS
SELBST DAS GEWÜNSCHTE

[“OUR IGNORANCE IN ASKING”: A
PARAPHRASE. MARCH 1918]

(Werke, V. 33, “Hermann und Dorothea”)

THE gifts we longed and prayed for
The great gods send them down,
They send perhaps a martyrdom
When we desired a crown;

But though our wishes painted them
In fraudulent disguise,
The gifts we longed and prayed for
Are here before our eyes.

FROM "AN DIE FREUDE"
[TO JOY, OR FREEDOM]

(Schiller's "Gedichte," p. 53. Stanzas 1 to 8 inclusive, with the omission of 4 and 7, are sung in the last movement of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony.)

I

JOY, thou spark of flame divinest,
 Beauteous daughter of the sky,
Soul-enkindled, where thou shinest,
 Queen, we seek thy sanctuary.
Thy sweet spell binds each to other
 'Spite of fashion's rending laws ;
Man knows man to be his brother
 Where thy gentle pinions pause.

2

Seek, ye millions, dear embraces,
 Here's a kiss for all who love ;
There's a Father throned above,
 Brothers, in the heavenly places.

FROM "AN DIE FREUDE" ♫

3

When the splendid hazard's gainèd,
 Friend to be of trusty friend,
When a gentle bride's attainèd,
 Then your song with ours shall blend ;
Yea, come hither, he that knoweth
 His on this wide earth but one ;
Who knows none, forlorn he goeth
 Forth of love's dear union.

4

Naught be on earth's globe that bow not
 Reverently to sympathy ;
Starwards ever leadeth she
 To his temple whom we know not.

5

Joy quaffs all things where it gushes
 From all-bounteous nature's breast ;
Good or bad, each being rushes
 Where her rosy track's impressed.
Wine she gave us, gave us kisses,
 Friendship that defies the sword ;
And the worm may know what bliss is,
 And the angel sees his Lord.

FROM "AN DIE FREUDE" ♫

6

Millions, fall in adoration,
Wouldst, O earth, thy maker know ?
Far above yon stars that glow
Must thou seek his habitation.

7

Joy's the mighty spring of forces
Through eternal nature hurled ;
Joy it is that spurs the courses
Of the great wheels of the world ;
Calls the flowers from their birth-places,
Calls the suns from out the sky,
Rolls the spheres in mighty spaces
More than optic tubes descry.

8

Like the suns that traverse glorious
Orbits gladly through the sky,
Traverse ye your destiny
Gladly as a knight victorious.

9

From truth's awful fiery mirror
Smiles she back the student's gaze,

FROM "AN DIE FREUDE" ■

And leads uphill, free from error,
Him who would live holy days.
Men have seen her standard streaming
On the sunlit heights of faith,
Seen her 'mid the angels gleaming
Through the riven robes of death.

10

Bear, ye millions, bear in patience,
That the better world may come ;
For above yon starry room
There's a God of consolations.

Kai δὴ καταιθεὶ γαῖαν

“THE DANCE OF DEATH”

TRANSLATED DECEMBER 1870

(Lycophron)

O, where the war-god leads the dance of
death,
Loosing a fiery whirlwind on the land ;
The fair fields wasted lie mine eyes be-
neath ;
While for tall harvests ranged on every hand
Thick gleaming spear-points in the meadows
stand ;
But the great tower tops send mine ear a cry,
Torn robes and wailing of a woman-band,
That strikes upon the still dome of the sky,
Plaining of woe on woe piled up continually.

Oὐ καταισχυνῶ ὅπλα τὰ ίερὰ

THE ATHENIAN'S CONFIRMATION VOW

ON HIS ENTRANCE INTO THE CITIZEN ARMY AT
THE AGE OF EIGHTEEN

NEVER dishonour this my sacred shield,
Never desert my comrade in the field,
Whether with aid, or at extremest
odds,

To fight for hearth and home, and Athens' gods ;
To reverence and obey those that shall stand
From year to year as judges in our land ;
To obey our laws, and all that shall be, still,
'Stablished and sanctioned by our nation's will ;
And against all who would subvert her laws,
Aided or no, to battle in their cause ;
And that my vows and offerings shall be paid
In those same temples where our fathers prayed,
So help me, gods that guard Athene's hill,
As this my oath I steadfastly fulfil.

THE GOOD WILL

(Labienus desired that Cato should inquire somewhat at the oracle of the Libyan Ammon. But Cato made answer thus.)

(Lucan's "Pharsalia," IX. 566-586)

WHAT wouldest, my friend, that Cato
should inquire ?
Need he be told what conscience
bids desire ?
Whether 'twere better die in arms, and free,
Than see Rome sink into a tyranny ?
If man's mere life be naught that merits praise,
And to live long but lengthens out his days ?
If that the just can fear no violence,
Nor fortune against virtue do offence ?
If 'tis enough that men will what they should,
And triumph adds no lustre to the good ?
All this we know, nor is our certain sense
One jot more sure for Ammon's evidence.
Heaven lies about us, and we do its will,
Not uninspired, though all the shrines be still ;

THE GOOD WILL

God needs no language, for at birth he taught
All man can know, and that is all he ought :
Nor has Jove willed in Afric's burning zone
To preach his truth to wandering tribes alone ;
Nor buried here, amid the shifting sands,
That revelation all the world demands ;
For where is God, but in the earth and sea,
And clouds and sky—and truth and purity ?
Why blindly seek we other gods to know ?
Jove is where'er we look, where'er we go,
Leave divination to the fools that quail
Before the future's dark ambiguous veil,
No oracle supports my certain faith,
One thing is certain, and that thing is death.
This Jove reveals, and more were idle breath.

So Cato left unsearched the temple's fame,
Unbroke the spell of Ammon's prophet-name.

AN INSCRIPTION FOR ALL COUNCIL- CHAMBERS

(Aristotle, "Eth. Nic." I. iv. 7)

" **H**EAR what Hesiod says :
Supreme is he whose wit meets
every need,
And he is good who wise advice will heed ;
But he that cannot teach, nor will not learn,
He is a fool that no man's wage should earn."

A VOICE FROM THE OLD GERMANY

(Goethe's "Gedichte," I. 301)

NOT of the great is he, my Prince, amid
Germany's Princes,
Scanty and narrow his land, bounded
his wealth and his power.

Yet did they all exert at home and abroad their
resources

After his model, 'twere joy German with Germans
to be.

"Why offer praises to him, whose acts and achieve-
ments proclaim him,
And your regard, perchance, bribery-fed may
appear?"

For he bestowed on me what great ones seldom
afford us;

Kindness, leisure, and trust; paddock, and garden,
and house.

Only to him were owing my thanks, though much
had I needed,

A VOICE FROM THE OLD GERMANY

I, who as poet possessed poorly the technique of
gain.

Europe praised me, indeed, but with what has
Europe endowed me?

Nothing! myself have paid, dearly enough, for
my verse.

Germany followed my lead, and France was de-
sirous to read me,

England, you welcomed the guest, though 'twas
in fragments he came.

What is the gain to me, that even the artist of
China

Paints with meticulous hand Werther and Char-
lotte on glass?

No king cared about me, no Kaiser inquired of
my welfare,

He was my Maecenas, he my Augustus as well.

VERSES

By H. B.

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OXSHOTT COMMON IN WAR-TIME

WHEN there was peace,—how many years ago?—

Our common was the sunny nurse of life,

The home of lizards slipping to and fro,
And little creatures little given to strife.

Squirrels, and cooing doves, and hoarse-voiced jays

Made harmless ambush in among the trees ;
And rabbits lay concealed through summer days,
Leaving their dug-outs with the evening breeze.
Sweetest of all, like clusters of sweet flowers,
Rosy-cheeked babies ran and laughed and played
Their childish games through all the long, bright hours,

Watched over by the nursery-maids' brigade.

But in these days a sterner note there falls
Across the fluting treble of our song,
The tramp of marching and loud bugle calls,
The sound of many voices from the throng ;

OXSHOTT COMMON IN WAR-TIME ♀

The crash of high explosives on the hill
Re-echoed by the rifle's rattling fire,
While soldiers gather to the whistle's thrill,
And scouting parties creep from bush to brier.

My poor old dachs, a timid German spy,
Shrinks to my side before the onward charge,
And with beseeching eyes she questions why
So many dangerous men should be at large.

Nor will the echo of the war-time die;
“ Do you remember ? ” we shall often say,
Wandering between brown heather and blue sky
When there is peace—how many years away ?

NON TALI AUXILIO

(" Mediums are said to be doing a good business.")

" **H**AVE we not earned our rest?" Oh,
 hear them plead
Whom Death has drawn across the
 dividing line.

You should have kept their memory as a shrine,
A holy place, where he who runs might read
The lovely record of a noble deed ;
Nor sought, with restless craving for a sign,
By vulgar aid to break the peace divine
Which gathers round the kingdom of the freed.

Were there indeed no barrier that could save
Their spirits from the importunity
Which looks to necromancy for a proof
The dead will talk with us, nor hold aloof,
Far better were the silence of the grave
Than life entangled in futility.

OLD AGE: 1916

I F I should die while some fierce battle rages,
And my soul, slipping from its worn-out
sheath,
Hesitate, lingering, loth to wander further,
Weary with travail in this world beneath ;
Would the swift crowd of bright heroic spirits
Slain on the field of death, eager and strong,
Rush past impetuous, careless of my weakness,
Or cry a welcome : " Granny, come along ! " ?

THEY SHALL RENEW THEIR YOUTH

THese are the men who died at Marathon,
Who held the passes at Thermopylae,
Who gave themselves that Europe might
be free

And the Greek spirit through the ages run.
It lives again 'neath Britain's milder sun,
In British homes beyond the distant sea,
In valorous France and radiant Italy,
And fights once more that freedom may be won.

Weep gently, mothers, if your sons are slain ;
They are the sons of freedom and of truth
Who for their birthright die, and not in vain
Have lived and shall live in recurrent youth.
They live, they die, and shall renew their birth
While freedom finds a home upon the earth.

THE OLD WOMAN'S WAR WORK

I 'D write a poem if I could,
Would dry your eyes of tears ;
I'd launch a flashing word which
would
Be heard adown the years ;
I'd hold the Kaiser up to shame
Until he lost his crown ;
I'd weave a laurel wreath of fame
Would ne'er go sere and brown :
And so I take my pencil up and lay my knitting
down.

Alas ! your tears will not be stayed
By little words in rhyme ;
My puny thoughts are all afraid
To trust themselves to Time ;
I think perhaps the Kaiser too
Would scarcely heed my frown ;

THE OLD WOMAN'S WAR WORK

And some might say my claims are few
To weave the laurel crown ;
And so I take my knitting up and lay my pencil
down.

I'll shape the toe and turn the heel
And vary ribs and plains,
And hope some soldier-man may feel
The warmer for my pains ;
I'll fashion mitten, sock, and glove
In navy-blue and brown,
And finish with a touch of love
May call a blessing down,
When I shall take my knitting up and lay my
pencil down.

BOYS AND MEN

'T IS not so long ago I thought those boys
A bit too lively and too fond of noise ;
So big and clumsy too, they seemed
to fill

Our little room from door to window-sill ;
And then their smoking, which I couldn't bear,
And all the socks I had to mend—but there,
What if I did lose patience now and then ?
I knew the lads would one day turn to men.

Their voices did not sound too loud that day
They sang and shouted on the dusty way ;
Nor were they clumsy then, but strong and
straight

They marched, as I stood watching at the gate.
And now the home is empty, and the boys
Have left me longing for their merry noise ;
My hands and heart are missing them, but then
I know that they have turned to proper men.

THE PUZZLED CONSCIENCE

WHEN first I said I wouldn't fight I
wasn't very keen,
But merely thought I'd rather be as
I had always been,
A quiet lad who gave his folk no reason for com-
plaint,
And never thought of figuring as shirker or as
saint.

It made me feel a little proud to hear a fellow say
I had conscientious scruples against joining in the
fray ;
But it hurt when others murmured that perhaps
my heart was faint,
For I hoped I was no shirker, though I feared I
was no saint.

THE PUZZLED CONSCIENCE

But now I'm fairly puzzled as to what it's right to
do ;
Whichever way I turn my mind it's nearly torn in
two,
For duty bids me join at once, while conscience
says I mayn't,
And I'd hate to be a shirker, though I'd like to be
a saint.

THE ROCK

L IKE some great rock that stands securely based
And checks the rushing torrent of the stream,
Its footing on the solid earth, its crest
Upreared to Heaven to catch the sunlight's gleam ;
Behind, a waste of shifting waters breaks
Stormy and clamorous, broken and flecked with fear ;
In front, within the shelter that it makes,
A wide still pool, serene and deeply clear :
So stands the thinker, fixed on truth below
And reaching high to catch fresh rays of light,
Meeting the torrent in its noisy flow
Of doubt, and broken thought, and jealous spite.
While in his shelter peace and clear-eyed love
Lie still and deep, and in their calm I move.

DREAMLAND

S TRANGE world of dreams, in which I
wander slow,
A vagrant soul strayed from the world of
day,
Where brief-lit visions meet me on my way
And pass like bubbles on the waters' flow :
Strange world of dreams.

Light without shadows, voices without sound,
Mysterious terrors lurking out of sight,
Or swift pursuing through an endless night
An unresisting victim horror bound :
Strange world of dreams.

Sometimes a hostile space deludes me on
Along a dusty road without an end,
Or wearily with aching heart I bend
To climb a barren rock beneath the sun :
Strange world of dreams.

DREAMLAND

Or mocking Time flies past the while I try
In panting haste a given task to loose ;
Hours shrink to minutes, each of which renews
The Sisyphean task perpetually :
 Strange world of dreams.

Yet often on a friendlier shore I roam,
Watching great waves which rise and curve and
 break,
Feeling the spray and wind upon my cheek
And round my feet the whitening rings of foam :
 Strange world of dreams.

Sometimes in waters of clear pools I lie
And bathe my body in their cool embrace :
Or without effort glide from place to place
And know the joy of happy things that fly :
 Strange world of dreams.

And here alone to the lone soul are given
Bright glimpses of loved faces that have passed :
“ Where have you been ? oh, have you come at
 last ?
Are we on earth, or in the courts of Heaven ? ”
 Dear world of dreams.

THE WANDERERS

IN strong battalions marching heavenward
The churches militant in splendour press ;
Saints for their leaders, statesmen for their
guard,
Warriors for heroes in the battle's stress.

Their standards bear the Word of God revealed ;
Their music, thundering pæans to the sky,
Proclaims their Lord a strong defence and shield,
A succour while they live and when they die.

Separate they march ; each holding on its way
In haughty truce regards the alien throng,
Looking for judgment at the awful day
To show them right, and prove their neighbours
wrong.

But who are these who wander at the side ?
A straggling band, bewildered, doubtful, lost.
Nor saints, nor warriors, nor statesmen guide
A leaderless and undistinguished host.

THE WANDERERS

Is God their Father ? Has He shown His Word ?
Sometimes they hope, and think it may be so ;
Long have they listened, seldom have they heard,
And all they know is that they do not know.

No march triumphant to a heavenly goal,
Their way is rugged and their sight is dim ;
Only they feel the craving of the soul,
Only they hope that they may trust in Him.

Still in each heart a Presence dimly known
Guides them unseen along the obscure way ;
And while they deem that each one walks alone
They move in harmony towards the day.

LOW LIFE

NO hands, no feet, no head, no tail ;
Just a brown body, now long, now
round ;
An unprotected houseless snail
He drags along the ground :
Slow, slow, we can hardly see him go
As he wanders on his shining silver trail.

A long tail and bright eyes,
A brown slim body and four little feet,
Basking still in the sunlight he lies,
Then a wriggle and twist, and a dart so fleet :
Quick, quick, we can hardly see him flick
As he slips through the heather after flies.

A BIRTHDAY GREETING

FIFTY-NINE'S a lovely age,
All the wisdom of the sage,
With the stores of manhood's prime
Still untouched by thieving Time.
Life's completest, richest page,
Fifty-nine's a lovely age.

GLEANERS

LEST any of Life's harvest should be lost
God sets old people dreaming in their
chairs,

To glean the field of memory, whence
the host
Of chroniclers have reaped the golden ears.

The old folk wander through forgotten hours,
And bring back treasures overlooked before ;
Ripe grain, and scarlet weeds, and little flowers
Of joy and sorrow, over which they pore.

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